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Prevention and Correction of Reading Disabilities

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PERSISTENT efforts by many investigators with varied interests have resulted in the development and appraisal of a diversity of remedial reading procedures. Regardless of the claims made by the protagonists of certain reading methods, the fact remains that approximately 75% of the seven year old children have attained some degree of mechanical skill in reading. For the good readers, then, it is safe for the pragmatist to assume that legitimate methods consistently used will produce results.

Our children are to a degree what we parents and teachers cause them to be. We unintentionally create many of their learning problems. This situation will undoubtedly continue to exist until we clearly comprehend the difference between learning and teaching situations.

Dealing with reading handicaps on the elementary school level requires, in the main, a teacher experienced in first grade reading methods and trained in physiological psychology, mental hygiene, mental health, and clinical psychology. This type of remedial teaching is one significant aspect of special class work. It is especially important because many in-

telligent children with such handicaps often are rated as dull. A misuse of group tests of general intelligence (21)* has too frequently been used to verify such suspicions. Briefly, one who would bring the greatest understanding to disabled readers must of necessity be a persistent and relentless clinician. (12)

Corrective aspects of a reading program may be outlined briefly as follows:

I. Prevention

- A. Reading readiness (36) activities during the pre-reading program.
- B. Postponement of initial learning to read period until the child is psychologically and physiologically ready to read.
- C. Correction of visual defect or binocular anomaly by means of orthoptic training, glasses (size lenses, prisms, and plus and minus lenses).
- D. Correction of auditory and other defects.
- E. Determination of individual's psychological and physiological handicaps.

* Numbers refer to titles in the bibliography, page 30.

II. Remediation

- A. Auditory training when it can be profitably administered for the reinforcement of other types of imagery.
- B. Kinaesthetic training by means of the Fernald-Keller or Betts Visual-kinaesthetic training techniques.
- C. Visual training by means of well motivated instruction and materials.
- D. Correction of physical defects by a specialist.

In regard to reading procedures, two questions immediately arise: First, what was the physiological (11) and psychological cost (28, 29) to the good readers? Second, what corrective procedures (30, 31, 55, 56, 57) for poor readers can be applied by the clinician or the teacher? Techniques (10) for the study of one phase of the first problem are now available for teachers and psychologists. The philosophy basic to the modern school program and the ever increasing amount of substantial research data point to the desirability of increasing the age at which a child should be required (pedagogically forced) to begin the process. Recent researches by Davidson (18), Hildreth (38, 39), Jones (41), Teegarden (67, 68, 69) and others should cause us to inquire into the validity of the proposition that for some children reading should be postponed until the seventh or eighth year. All these investigators found that the tendency toward reversals decreases with age. Many eye specialists, psychologists and educators (9, 19, 43, 59, 76) have long questioned the wisdom of typical first grade reading requirements.

The second problem can be answered by the statement that no "rule of thumb" method or methods can be advanced by the scientifically minded for the correction of all reading disabilities. Likewise, those

who advance theories by which they claim to analyze all such aberrations and anomalies place themselves in a professionally precarious position. Obviously, such claims cannot be satisfactorily subjected to the principles of logic. In brief, the problem of correction will be modified by future researches on reading aptitude and the continued development of analysis and remedial procedures.

Children have been taught to read (62, 75) successfully by the following group methods: (1) the A B C or alphabet method, (2) the word method, (3) the phonetic method, (4) sentence method, (5) story method, and (6) the developmental method.

The alphabet method was mechanical and time consuming. Because children were unable to master new words, the inadequacy of the word method became apparent. The analytic and synthetic systems of teaching phonetics were developed in order to provide a technique for "word attack." In the evolution toward a procedure which would permit a greater emphasis on comprehension, the sentence method was advanced. The story method was an extension of the word and sentence methods. The developmental method capitalized on the salient features of the other methods and was characterized by individual and class dictation of stories. Gates (27) has done much to sensitize us to the need for intrinsic reading exercises.

Most systems of reading employed in typical school situations are dictated by the basal texts and the accompanying teachers' manual. Only an aggressive and experienced teacher can hope to avoid the pitfalls of any given method.

Remedial reading procedures are required where group methods have failed. A careful examination of extant materials for disabled readers provides an interesting exhibit of vague and frequently conflicting evidences. In spite of the several hundred titles of research reports,

magazine articles, and books, there remains a paucity of experimentally valid analyses and corrective courses of action for specific disabilities. In addition to this, no one has experimentally appraised certain apparently desirable preventive measures.

Our philosophy regarding learning disabilities has been chiefly concerned with remediation rather than prevention. Many administrators point with great pride to the amount and quality of remedial work in their schools, but few have actually made their staffs and communities sentient to the need for precautionary measures. From available researches it is probably safe to conclude that many reading difficulties may be obviated by—

- (1) Determination of physiological readiness to read. This should be considered on all grade levels.

- (2) Determination of psychological readiness to read. This is especially important for the study of first grade entrants. Attention span, emotional maturity, and a good background of information are essentials.

- (3) Determination of hand preference. Until further evidence is offered, a child should be encouraged to write with the hand with which he exhibits the greatest facility.

- (4) Postponement of initial learning-to-read period until the child exhibits a general readiness to read.

- (5) Correction, in so far as possible, of speech defects (14).

- (6) Providing the proper external conditions. This includes such factors as proper lighting and adequate administrative policies regarding the curriculum and entrance ages.

Retraining in reading habits must embrace three major aspects of the problem: the physiological, the psychological, and the pedagogical. The physiological phase is one for the specialist and not for the

psychologist or teacher. Where the individual is carrying a visual, auditory, or other physical handicap, it is important that the teacher and specialist coordinate their efforts. Many times the individual should be relieved of reading activities until the condition has been remedied.

Faulty eye habits, refractive errors, and ocular anomalies are corrected by operation, glasses or orthoptic training (33, 42, 64, 65) depending upon the nature of the case. In addition, special help should be given by the teacher in the light of above procedure.

Considerable research is being conducted at Dartmouth Medical College on aniseikonia (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 32, 40, 46, 47, 53, 54) (differences in size and shape of ocular images) which is corrected with "size lenses." The investigators have found that some individuals experience discomfort and other difficulties because of differences in the size and shape of ocular images.

The near-sighted person is usually not a candidate for remedial reading. Astigmatism (51) and far-sightedness (refractive errors corrected by glasses) are undoubtedly significant factors contributing to some types of disabilities. Further research on astigmatism in the vertical meridian is needed. The vertical lines of letters (17) are potent elements of the desire for visual fusion. Frequently the eye specialist is able to correct faulty eye coordination by means of orthoptic training (eye training) exercises. In many cases it also will be necessary for the subject to wear a correction. The use of stereoscopic pictures in the library and classroom have an added value from this point of view.

Both good readers and disabled readers have the right to eye comfort. Dr. Eames (M. D.) (22) has found significant differences to exist between "good" and "poor" readers when certain binocular factors are measured. Dr. C. A. Selzer

(61) concluded that there is a relationship between lateral muscle imbalance and certain reading disabilities. The writer (10) has found a number of cases who improved their reading, as measured by standardized tests, when certain refractive errors were corrected and good binocular vision was established. On higher grade levels the differences between the good and poor readers, when tested with stereoscopic slides, appears to be less pronounced. But certainly, *few feel that one possible reading disability correlate can be used to account for all reading disabilities.* Some individuals appear to evidence a higher degree of counterpoise for overcoming eye-muscle imbalance, differences in size and shape of ocular images, sluggish visual fusion, and refractive errors.

The earliest and most intensive research in this field of reading had to do with eye movements. Few books on reading methodology or reading disabilities fail to include chapters on the work of the eyes in reading. Many significant recent investigations in reading, conducted in the fields of optometry, psychology, and education, have been related to specific factors in binocular or two-eyed seeing. All of which convinces the writer that the eyes are still important for the reading process.

Certain psychological factors are often symptoms which may persist after the physiological causes have been corrected. Monroe's (49) scholarly research emphasizes this contention. The longer this type of disability is allowed to persist, the greater is the problem for the teacher. Emotional stability of the learner must be consciously developed by both the teacher and the coöperating specialist.

Pedagogical procedures are many and varied. By and large, the remedial steps should parallel the analysis findings. Monroe (50) analyzed the symptomatic errors made by disabled readers and sug-

gested the parallel remedial methods. The nine type errors described by her afford a departing point for a more thorough analysis of the causes.

For some primary children, material printed in 24-point type has proved helpful. Stories read from a blackboard or large chart may better accomplish this purpose. The Syncroptiscope (66) has an additional value in that the learner is trained in left to right reading habits.

Until evidence is offered to the contrary, all the materials prepared by the teacher should be written in manuscript rather than in cursive. The typewriter may be used to advantage in individual cases. In such instances the child is encouraged to dictate an interesting personal adventure. Later he is permitted to read the story aloud.

Fernald and Keller (26) have been very successful in their development of techniques for corrective reading. Under controlled conditions, the following procedures proved to be effective:

- (1) Discouraging the saying of letters.
- (2) Listening to the total sound of the word missed.
- (3) Writing words without copy.
- (4) Establishing early success and keeping a visible record of achievement.
- (5) In some cases, permitting the tracing of the word before reproduction.
- (6) Writing words from the exposure of the printed word. (Writing the total word only from print was permitted. Frequently more than one exposure was required, but for each exposure the *entire* word was reproduced).
- (7) Conducting individual oral reading lessons (10-15 minutes daily) after the child exhibited ability to write common words from print. (a) Un-

known words pronounced for child. (b) After the reading of each sentence words presenting difficulty were written by pupil (using technique described under 6). (c) Each block of four or five unknown or miscalled words was mastered by writing and location in text before continuing with the reading. (d) Work for each day was initiated by careful review of non-recognized words which involved the finding of the words in the text. (e) Recognition rather than reproduction was emphasized. (f) No drill on auditory or visual analysis of words was given.

Another kinaesthetic help the teacher can give the beginner is an oak tag guide or mark, to be used under each line read. In the past this has been frowned upon, but its value is now probably unquestioned for use in the first grade. Some children may profitably use the guide in second grade.

Tachistoscopic or flash card exercises are also valuable materials for promoting rapid comprehension. Materials are now being prepared in the writer's clinic for use with a tachistoscope (short exposure device) mounted on an ophthalmic telebinocular. By the skillful use of flash cards, the teacher can invent challenging games which will hold the attention of the learner. Newell (52) suggests the use of such games as "capturing words."

Another visual attack has been made by the writer, using a stereoscopic (10) method. Interesting stories have been mounted on stereoscopic slides. By decreasing the level of depth perception for each succeeding word, left-to-right mechanical reading habits are encouraged. Gates and Bennett (30) suggest the value of demonstration and explanation by the teachers of the left-to-right progression.

The unique visual method (63) developed in Detroit for group instruction

is a valuable reinforcement to the usual techniques employed for remedial purposes. Maloy (48) under the direction of Dr. Yoakam, experimentally demonstrated the efficacy of this visual technique.

The vocabulary burden contributes in no small measure to a beginner's difficulty with reading. Modern reading materials for the primary grades, built in terms of well-known vocabulary studies, minimize this obstacle. The Durrell (20) list has proved most helpful for building corrective materials.

Regarding typography, Blackhurst (13) concluded that 24-point is more readable in the first grade, and 18-point type in grades two, three, and four. Buckingham (15) concluded, on the basis of speed and comprehension, that 12-point type is suitable for second grade reading material. However, no data on disabled readers are available regarding this factor.

Teachers have been made more and more aware of the need for materials which decrease optic fatigue and perception time (70, 71, 72, 73). The length of line (74) for primary reading materials has not proved to be a significant factor. Although there are at present a paucity of conclusive data, publishers have recently succeeded in developing materials more nearly hygienically correct and certainly more attractive to children.

Dominance (30, 44) is a questionable element in the problem of reading disability. No attempt is made here to discuss the significance and validity of the arguments advanced by the protagonists of this theory. This will be discussed in a forthcoming publication by the writer. In a recent research report, Phillips (60) concluded that left-handed children make no more reversals in reading than right-handed children. However, this is no argument for changing handedness for writing (34). The use of a typewriter by the student controls this motor aspect of dominance.

The control of illumination intensity is essential for both normal and slow groups. Luckiesh and Moss (45) have conducted many well-controlled investigations of this phase of the problem. Few of our classrooms can meet adequate lighting standards. Certainly this is one external condition which can be controlled.

In the light of recent research, the following principles may safely be applied to corrective reading:

(1) Most reading disabilities can be prevented.

(2) Severely handicapped readers and non-readers require individual instruction.

(3) Visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic imageries should be caused to reinforce one another.

(4) The teacher should have access to instruments for the analysis and identification of her problems and to corrective materials which parallel the diagnostic procedures.

(5) Non-pedagogical problems should be identified and referred to specialists for help.

(6) Reading methods which emphasize auditory training will not prove fruitful for children with auditory handicaps such as a narrow auditory frequency range.

(7) The teacher and the administration should seek the coöperation of the psychologist, physician, aurist, and eye specialist in order to identify definitely the psychological and physiological aspects of their problems.

(8) Larger size type with suitable leading or inter-linear spacing should be used for the construction of corrective materials. This is especially significant for cases experiencing a visual or eye coördination handicap. For first and second grade children, much material written in manuscript on the blackboard or charts is highly desirable.

(9) Awareness of success (58) is a significant factor in the progress and achievement of a disabled reader. Intrinsic values should be stressed. Super-motivation is essential in all cases.

(10) Vocabulary burden and sentence structure of corrective reading materials should be carefully controlled.

(11) Most reading disabilities can be remedied.

(12) No one type of corrective material can be equally effective for all individuals.

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Teaching English Composition Through Purposeful Activities

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ONE OF the most important objectives in the study of English is the ability to speak and write correctly and forcefully. A study of English usage and composition in connection with purposeful activities seems to be the best means of reaching this objective.

There are numerous social situations in everyday life that may be brought into the classroom and used as a basis for purposeful activities in English. Every day each individual engages in some social activity that calls for oral language. The activity may be a casual conversation, a defense of an opinion, an argument for or against a question, a personal application for employment, or a discussion before a group. The most common social situations that require written English are those of writing letters to relatives or friends and writing business letters. Other activities in which individuals may use written language are writing recipes, writing directions for reaching a destination, writing news items for publication, and writing stories for publication or for others in the original.

Many teachers recognize the situations in which children use English in their daily social experiences as sources of purposeful activities that are challenging and that create a strong interest in language usage. The following suggestions present

some of the practices which teachers have used successfully.

Conversation: Pupils engage many times during the day in conversation with one another. They talk to the class or to other groups of pupils about topics in the various school subjects. Any class discussion is an activity in which the use of good English is one of the objectives. The school subject supplies the facts necessary for the discussion, and the discussion itself gives an opportunity for training pupils not only to use the facts in the solution of problems, but also to express their own ideas clearly. As pupils prepare for these discussions, they plan to use correct, forceful English.

Giving directions: Pupils are often called upon outside of school to give directions for reaching certain points in the community. This situation is brought into the classroom, and pupils are trained in the art of giving directions that are understandable. This activity is motivated by having pupils give directions for traveling from the school to some point in the community without naming the destination. Other pupils are asked to name the destination for which they think the directions are intended.

Book talks: Another means of providing purposeful activities in teaching oral English is that of having pupils give talks

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safety, care of animals, facts about conservation of resources, and other topics. As a part of their English work, pupils write to various organizations, requesting materials for class use. Different pupils may write to different organizations.

Giving directions: A pupil who wants to write directions for playing a game or for making an article receives whatever help he needs in writing understandable directions. Every pupil in the class knows how to do something that he can tell others how to do. Each pupil chooses something he can do well, and writes directions for doing that particular thing. After these compositions have been revised, they are bound in a folder and used for reference when pupils wish such information.

Often it is necessary for a pupil to write directions about reaching some point in the community. For example, a friend or a relative may be coming on a visit. This person may wish directions for reaching the pupil's home after the guest reaches the community in which the pupil lives. Such a situation is recognized by the alert teacher as an excellent opportunity for teaching English.

Stories and news items: Another important type of activity is that of writing stories and news items. Many schools publish a school paper. Where this is done, the paper furnishes a strong incentive for pupils to write news items, jokes, or creative stories for publication. In some schools the paper is printed; in others it is only mimeographed. In some instances where the paper cannot be printed or mimeographed, the school or an individual class in the school issues a single copy of a magazine consisting of the best things which the pupils write. Since there is only one copy of this magazine, it is all the more valuable. It is necessary to have an editing committee, and usually the teacher is editor-in-chief. One issue of the magazine is made each semester or each year. It is bound in looseleaf form, and as

worthy contributions are received from time to time, they are added. As the magazine is being developed and after it is completed, it is usually circulated among the pupils of the class and their parents, and perhaps among the pupils of other classes.

Another means of purposeful activities in English is illustrated by the practice of allowing pupils of the seventh and eighth grades to write each year a story about their community, for which they are given credit toward graduation. At the end of the year the stories which are accepted are published in pamphlet form. One such publication is called *Stories of Pioneer Days in LaSalle County, Illinois*.⁴ The preparation of the stories for this publication furnished a strong incentive for pupils to learn facts about their community and to write these facts in such form that others could read and enjoy them. The stories contain much valuable information which might have been lost but for this school activity.

The resourceful teacher will find many social situations which may be used as purposeful activities in English. It is not necessary that all pupils react to the same situation every day. In a class discussion all pupils must discuss the same problem. But in other types of oral English one pupil may tell about an experience, another may give a book talk, and another may discuss a current event or a topic in some other school subject. In written English one pupil may wish to write a letter, another pupil may wish to write a story, and another may wish to write directions for doing something or reaching some place. As long as the pupil is engaged in a purposeful activity and is endeavoring to express his thoughts freely, clearly, and interestingly, he is gaining ability in English composition which cannot be gained in any other way.

⁴ W. R. Foster, County Superintendent of Schools, Ottawa, Illinois.

about books they have read. Book talks are prepared with the purpose of assisting the listeners in their reading activities. Then the pupil does not feel that giving a book talk is a burden; he feels the delight which comes from the giving of information that is of value to others.

Friendly letters: Social situations requiring written language are also brought into the classroom. The most common situation in which pupils use written English is that of writing friendly letters. Most pupils like to receive letters, but in order to receive them, they must write. Fitzgerald¹ investigated the contents of letters written by pupils of the fifth and sixth grades and the persons to whom the letters were directed. Nearly all of the letters were written to friends or relatives. A very large percentage of the letters contained information about experiences, activities, and events of life. A much smaller percentage contained information about objects, gave information about school, or expressed thanks. Thus it will be seen that most of the letters that children write are letters to relatives or friends and are about their own personal experiences.

Under proper guidance writing letters as an activity in English becomes a source of real pleasure. The English class becomes a means of stimulating pupils to correspond with relatives or friends in other communities or with pupils in other schools. Preparation for letter writing includes a discussion of news or other information which will be of interest to others. Thus each pupil has something to say when he writes. The correct form and the rules for writing letters are made a part of the activity and thus become a part of the pupils' good English practice.

Frequently a member of the class is absent for a few days because of illness or for some other reason. This furnishes

an excellent social situation for pupils who are interested to write the absent member about events that have taken place during his absence. Some teachers of English lead pupils into a desire to exchange letters with pupils of similar grade in a neighboring school. These situations present opportunities for pupils to write about their own surroundings for others to read.

A very valuable activity which serves as a stimulus in written English is that of pupils in American schools corresponding with pupils of like age and grade in foreign schools. The American Junior Red Cross² provides a medium through which international correspondence may be carried on. Pupils in more than fifty countries have exchanged correspondence through this agency. Any necessary translations are taken care of by the Red Cross. The writing of these letters becomes a great incentive for care in English and a source of pleasure to each pupil because his letter carries information which is of value to the one who receives it. He becomes anxious to use the correct letter form and to express himself in an interesting and understandable manner.

Business letters: Pupils also frequently write business letters. These letters may be for such purposes as ordering articles, making complaints about goods that have been delivered, making inquiries, or making application for employment. If the pupil who wishes to write such a letter is allowed to make it a part of his school activity, he will put forth his best effort in making the letter clear and in writing it in the correct form.

Sometimes a class wishes to secure information about forming clubs, developing health programs, or organizing safety campaigns. Many organizations³ supply pamphlets, class charts, and other materials which are useful in teaching health,

¹ *Peabody Journal of Education*, Vol. X, No. 3, pp. 172ff. Nov. 1932.

² The American National Red Cross, Washington, D.C.

³ See list in *School Life*, December, 1934, page 88.

Art of the Modern Children's Book in Europe*

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SINCE the days of Isaiah Thomas and other colonial publishers who imported many of the "flowery and gilt" volumes from the Newbery establishment of the "Bible and the Sun," the contact of the American child with literature from the other side of the Atlantic has been continuous. As methods of transportation and communication have developed, as the child audience has risen in the esteem of author, artist and public, the stream has grown wider and deeper. From Germany have come the immortal tales of Grimm and the irrepressible creations of Wilhelm Busch; from England the prim figures of Kate Greenaway, the rollicking portraits of Leslie Brooke, as well as the never-to-be-forgotten characters of Jim Hawkins and Mowgli. France fired the imagination of two continents with the tales of Verne, while Selma Lagerlöf and Elsa Beskow drew with pen and brush a land of birch trees and frozen rivers. Each year brings delightful additions to the American child's bookshelf.

Europe, however, has recently produced volumes, many of which have not as yet appeared in the United States—books which not only have achieved national popularity, but should be known in this country. From as far east as Russia and Poland, as far north as Finland, and south as far as Hungary, these interesting little volumes may be found to attract the reader, both young and old.

* Prepared under the direction of Miss Ethel Wright, Chairman, Book Evaluation Committee of the Children's Librarians' Section of the American Library Association.

Belgium, until five years ago, imported practically all of her books from neighboring nations; from France for the French-speaking, from Holland for the Flemish-speaking groups. Today a definite effort is being made to produce a distinctly national literature. The Labor party, now an important political power, has demanded inexpensive, attractive material for their children; to this end they have established in Brussels their own publishing house, the Eglantine Press. Easy readers, such as the *Rondes Enfantines* (Children's Rhymes)¹ with simple colored illustrations, while not great art, do represent a distinct advance over the early attempt of an artist of the seventies, Paul Monplaisir. The Flemish section, influenced both by Holland and Germany, has made a novel contribution. To offset the craving of the child for the comic strip type of literature, Dr. Hendrik van Tichelen, director of the School Museum in Antwerp, with the aid of the well-known artist, Felix Timmermans, prepared a series of picture books which incorporate the primitive, but better elements of the comics. One of these, *Van Nieuwjaar tot oudjaarsavond* (From the New Year to the Old) contains simple verses with illustrations of the different holidays, both national and international.

The interest of France in this pictorial type of literature dates back some forty years with the publication of *La Famille*

¹ Foreign titles have been translated by the writer of the article.

Fenouillard (The Fenouille Family) by the pseudonymous Christophe. The difficulties and pleasures of this family, not endowed with an over supply of gray matter, are pictured in black and white. In fact, their experiences are reminiscent of some American relatives, the Peterkins, but the *Famille Fenouillard* do not have the advantage of the ever ready, ever helpful advice of the Lady from Philadelphia.

In the field of children's books France has been incredibly traditional. Although the work of Boutet de Monvel inaugurated a new era in book illustration, André Hellé, in his dual rôle of author and artist, is the best representative of contemporary art. In 1929 appeared his well known *La Tour du Monde en 80 Pages* (Around the World in Eighty Pages) with its dashing, impressionistic sketches, but his latest work, *Les Douze Plus Belles Fables du Monde* (A Dozen of the World's Finest Tales) has only recently been imported. In these delicately colored illustrations he has adapted with remarkable skill his own art to the national spirit of the tales.

The photographic picture book, originally developed in Germany, is represented by a small volume, entitled *Regarde!* (Look!) by the photographer, Sougez, which presents the usual objects and scenes familiar to a young Parisian. The line of text opposite the illustration is brief and direct, and incidentally, would afford a pleasant introduction to the study of French.

As representative of Dutch art the work of Nelly van Bodenheimer has been selected, an artist who excels both in silhouette and water color. In *Groen Groen Grasse* (The Green Green Grass) the letters of the alphabet, which are found at the beginning of each short verse, have been fashioned into graceful, colorful miniature scenes, reminiscent of Kate Greenaway.

Germany possesses a fine array of

books, ranging all the way from the traditional to the ultra modernistic. Without doubt the most popular illustrator for little children is Gertrud Caspari, whose volumes are found in almost every German nursery. She is equally successful in her delineation of animals or children, as is evidenced by the heavy board, lithographic picture book *Tierbilderbuch* (Picture Book of Animals). The Russian emigré, Uzarski, is representative of the modernistic, and his *Kindliche Bilder* (Children's Pictures) contains half a dozen pictures, mounted on extremely heavy cardboards, of such familiar objects as dolls, kites, and brushes, painted in bright, flat, elementary colors. Picture books of a distinctly different type are the movable books of Tom Seidmann-Freud, an example of which is *Das Wunderhaus* (The Magic House). The "magic" consists in the appearance of new scenes and stories simply by the moving or changing of bits of paper, sometimes attached, sometimes detached from the text. Due in large part to the great decrease in her child population and the resulting limited market, Germany after the World War was forced to pay more and more attention to the inexpensive volume. Attractive, small books, within the reach of the majority, have been produced, mainly through the employment of young, struggling authors and artists, who by this means have been able to bring their work before the public. *Schacke, schacke, Reiter* (Trot, trot, Rider) is an admirable example of a book for the seven year old child, illustrated in soft pastel colors by Karl Mühlmeister. For the older group *Zwei Freunde* (Two Friends) written by Else Model and illustrated in sepia lithographs by Marianne Schneegans is a remarkable volume for its low price of twenty-five cents. Another artist, whose work is just appearing on this side of the water is Elsa-Wenz-Viëtor, who has a Rackham-like genius for creating flowers, gnomes, and insects, so well

exemplified in *Fahrt ins Blumenland* (Trip to Flowerland).

Austria has for years depended on Germany for the larger part of her juvenile literature, so that material of a distinctively national character was difficult to find. The publishing house, Sesame Company, through the enthusiastic interest and support of Frau Scheu-Riesz, has made a definite and successful attempt to print both national and international titles. A good example is *Das Jahr in Bildern* (The Year in Pictures) which describes in verse characteristic activities of each month, and is illustrated by the remarkable scissor cut silhouettes of Hans Mandl, a former pupil of Professor Cizek. The success of the venture may be measured by the fact that many young Viennese with but a few groschen in their pockets come to the little shop on Waldfischgasse, to buy the miniature, paper covered volumes, costing but five or ten cents.

A striking expression of national art is embodied in the volumes from Czechoslovakia. This new republic with passionate energy is stimulating the production of literature which shall be accessible to her people. Plays, folk tales, and picture books have appeared in quick succession, but none are more representative than the books of Kožíšek, whose charming stories of animal life have found a real interpreter in Rudolf Mates. His work is already so well known in this country, due to the fine translations of Szalatany, that a mention of individual titles is unnecessary.

Hungary, on the contrary, has little material of a distinctly national character. In the small city of Gyoma, however, lives a modern John Newbery, one Béla Belász, who is artist, author and publisher, all in one. For his own children's amusement he prepared three little books, one of which is the Christmas tale, entitled *Testvér Ország* (The Brother Country). The vignettes, as well as the full

page illustrations, are decorative, gay and delightfully national in spirit.

Out of the ashes of the land ruled over by Tzarist Russia has risen phoenix like the Republic of Poland. With intense enthusiasm authors and publishers are seeking to prepare volumes, expressive of the reborn national spirit. *Bracia Miesiące* (The Brother Months) presents figures of boys, dressed in different national costumes, engaged in activities, characteristic of the changing months and seasons. The graceful figures, painted in subdued tones of reds, browns and yellows, are as attractive for their fine rhythm of line to the adult, as for their narrative quality to the child.

The Scandinavian lands, especially Sweden, have provided many happy hours for children through the picture books of Elsa Beskow. An interesting attempt to break away from the traditional and employ newer art forms is seen in the *A B C Bok* of Aina Stenberg-Masolle, an artist whose paintings of national costumes and festivals have done much to preserve the old and traditional against the invasion of a machine age. Although Denmark still clings to a well-known classic of some forty years ago, *Peters Jul* (Peter's Christmas) by Pietro Krohn, an original piece of work has been attempted by an ultra modern artist, Ernst Hansen, in another *A B C* book of quarto size and with large, striking illustrations in black and white executed with a heavy brush. Finland, a land of pointed firs and roaring cataracts, has been incorporated in the delicate silhouettes of Cedercrentz in *Satuja ja Runoja Lapsille* (Stories and Rhymes for Children). This new nation has even experimented with the introduction of such a new art medium as linoleum cuts in educational books. Setälä's primer *Aapiskirja* (A B C) contains art work by Eric Ehrström, who has produced unusual designs of objects and scenes associated with national life.

The country, however, which is making the most original and distinctive contribution to the artistic and possibly the literary field is Soviet Russia. Many of the recent volumes have been copied or adapted by countries on both sides of the Atlantic. The subject matter reflects definitely the political creed, and is prepared for a two age audience, the adult and the child, for through the great agent of reading, Russia hopes to create a literate nation of her one hundred and sixty million souls, of whom one hundred million are under twenty-five years of age. For this reason editions must needs be from twenty to fifty thousand copies, and as paper is a rare commodity, the volumes are seldom longer than twenty pages, and even then the stock is so poor that one marvels at the excellence of the reproductions.

The publishing business, like the majority of the other activities, is in the hands of the government. In one press alone where children's books only are produced, two hundred authors and over a hundred artists may be called upon to produce books suited to the demands of the Central Committee on Education and the prevailing political ideology. Contrast with this wholesale diffusion of reading matter the meager supply of children's books in Tzarist days, when only the aristocracy could afford the precious volumes, and little encouragement was given to writers. In this period, however, appeared an artist, passionately devoted to his land, its literature and art, Ivan Bilibin, whose illustrations of the Russian folk tales rank among the masterpieces of their kind. Not only does the material found in the books prepared for the people reflect the political ideas, but also the most up-to-date scientific knowledge in the fields of current interest. Authoritative books on agriculture, industry, and animals come out of the presses in ever increasing numbers. In a land where conditions change so rapidly, titles, once the

original edition is exhausted, are not often reprinted. A few books of an earlier period have survived, as for example Fedorchenko's *Na Krylyshkakh* (On Little Wings), published in 1927.

Without doubt the leading genius in the field of illustration is Marshak, who has been singularly successful in adapting his ideas to the new conditions. With an uncanny paucity of stroke, a sure sense of draughtsmanship and composition, an appreciation of the requirements of the child audience, he fashions picture books, striking and appealing, in a host of media. The most recent example is *Progulka* (A Stroll on a Donkey) which is merely the Aesopic fable of "The Man, the Boy and the Donkey," while the Monet-like *Usatyi Polosatyi* (Whiskers and Stripes) about a little girl and her kitten represents the pastel medium.

Charushin has also become prominent through his portrayal of animals and birds. His uncanny genius for transferring to paper the texture of feathers and fur is admirably demonstrated in *Teremok* (The Little Attic) and *Tsypliachii Gorod* (A City of Chicks). Another artist who has done notable work in this field is Shvartz in his colorful picture books without text, *Ptichii Dvor* (The Poultry Yard) and *Skotnyi Dvor* (The Barnyard). An example of the work of the art of the woodcut is seen in *Korotkaia Zhizn* (A Short Life) which illustrates the story of the salmon. Technical books are represented by Markova's *Pismo o Farfore* (A Letter about Porcelain), illustrated by Tanarova, and Pankov's *Podlivnoe Koleso* (The Water Wheel), a brightly printed little volume on handicraft.

The booklets on life in Russia today are possibly the most unusual, such as *Nas Mnogo* (There Are So Many of Us) with pictures by Brei, and Papernaya's *Kak Postroiligorod* (How a City is Built) by Poret and Kalestena. The latter traces in four or five pages with only one sen-

tence of running text the evolution of a modern Russian industrial city from a cheerless marsh to a happy, busy community, replete with homes, schools, electricity, and hospitals.

Such all too briefly sketched are the main contributions to, and trends in, the art of the modern illustrated book for children, as exemplified by the work of some fourteen European nations. Illustrations are playing an increasingly important part in children's books, and artists, both known and unknown, are turning to the child audience as worthy of their best. In fact European children with their American cousins will echo with avidity the famous remark of the immortal Alice "what's the use of a book without pictures . . . ?"

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Subjective Experience in Appreciation

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(Continued from January)

THE TEACHER needs to have a flexible plan for continuing a lesson in appreciation through exploitation of the children's contributions. Even if the conversation should be mischievously designed to postpone some other school activity, the excuse is a worthy one and the situation closely resembles adult leisure pursuits at their best. On the other hand, even though requests for prolonging an experience directly serve a worthy purpose, it is essential to appreciation that its demands never be completely satisfied. Value is intensified by keeping a reserve of valued material on the highest pantry shelf. Effective procedure requires, not predetermined duration, but careful observation and evaluation of responses in each lesson. Lessons for one class have varied from twenty to a hundred minutes.

Care should be taken, too, that a period devoted to looking or listening for its own sake should end on a wholesome emotional level. Some teachers arrange the schedule so that aesthetics does not immediately precede physical education, manual art, or dismissal. The shattering of quiet, pleasant feeling by noisy activity may do violence to fine sensibilities or prevent permanence of appreciation. Very rarely emotion in an appreciation lesson may reach a pitch that cannot be healthfully sustained, but must be gradu-

ally lowered before a change in exercise. As illustration—a class was moved to unprecedented degree by the reading of a beautifully written version of *The Christ Child*. Some children had tears in their eyes, and the boisterous were subdued. They were not in mood for light conversation or even exchange of glances. The teacher prolonged the lesson beyond the planned duration to read with studied casualness some Christmas poems, finally stopping with *Night Before Christmas*.

The culminating feeling too may be the one that is to recur in day dreams and common associations most frequently. It sometimes happens that a new story, song, picture, or poem is not immediately appreciated. A lack of ready response does not indicate want of appeal in the material nor warrant its abandonment after one exposure. It does necessitate review of well known or pupil selected items before that lesson is closed.

It is characteristic of expressions of appreciation that they reveal associations peculiar to the individual. Children participating in the same informal lesson may make remarks that apparently have no relation to each other nor to the material under consideration. There is no reason why a group should argue or should agree about the meaning or the significance of art in any medium. Looking at an Inness landscape, children said:

"It is like Sunday afternoon."

"There is a pond just beyond the edge that doesn't show in the picture."

"That is the kind of place my grandfather would like to take me. It would be cool under those trees."

Before the children knew that the title of a record was *Spinning Song*, they said:

"Swing, swing, swing, swing."

"My mother hums to herself when she is working about the house."

"I think a little stream in a rock garden is nice."

Feeling could be lost in intellectual effort if explanation or justification of comment were asked for. But feeling can be refined or made more articulate by the sympathetic glance or gesture that signifies understanding.

Children accustomed to academic formality or the "self-activity" of a pseudo-progressive school may be suspicious of didactic purpose in every lesson. Some from homes of superior privilege have been coached in what is good taste. It is not surprising that such children should make precocious statements of sophisticated appreciation:

"I could hear the theme of the opera in several places."

"That poem has no rhyme, but the rhythm is interesting."

"The picture has both unity and contrast, hasn't it?"

"Some children don't believe in fairies, but I often see them in poems."

"Rookwood pottery has such a delightful satiny texture."

These children may be temporarily distressed when they fail to discern the ulterior motive, or find they are not cleverly impressive. Insight into individuality is required for critical evaluation of such comments and guidance toward a finer comprehension. It is easy to encourage glibness and sophistication in verbal children, especially if they are very intelligent. And it is very difficult to offer subjective experience to suspicious children. They can be freed from fawning and gradually initiated into the fun of honest reaction by

the gentle rebuff of an unimpressed audience. A teacher who is diligently alert for evidences of genuine appreciation needs no histrionic techniques to remain unresponsive to mere exhibition.

This leads to consideration of another basic attribute of art and its appreciation: namely, that it eventually progresses from simple sensory experience to more or less intellectual interest. It would be superficial to offer children experiences whose whole value could be realized in the present without opening doors of new and growing interest. The thesis stands that teachers have made a mistake in neglecting the essential foundation of sensory experience and freedom of choice. They have assumed, perhaps because their own adult, in many cases stilted, appreciations are enhanced by intellectual adornment, that children's appreciations are given original stimulus by intellectual approach. They have been known to introduce poetry with discussion of style, pictures with biography of the artist, and colors with technicalities of relationship. They have delivered lectures on what to look for and how to react. That procedure apparently is the reverse of growth of spontaneous appreciations. But increased emphasis upon informal experience and undictated response does not preclude development of intellectual interest. Experimentation shows that the type of technical analysis that has been diligently coerced in traditional teaching is in time created without coercion by uninstructed subjective experience.

If the materials have great worth, and if teaching cues are taken only from children's reactions, there develops a demand for enrichment of experience by information. A ten year old child had a one-sided conversation with an uninformative teacher:

"That picture (Home of the Heron—Inness) reminds me of *Dance of the Nymphs*."

"Yes?"

"It has that hazy, misty sort of air that makes the trees not too plain. Did the same man paint them?"

"No, different artists."

Did he offer sufficient provocation for giving biographical information about both artists and for quotation of comparison by the critics? Experimentation tends to justify postponement of data-about until direct questions are asked. The process of instructing only by answering is very slow—slow enough to allow the foundation of sensory experience to settle—and slow enough to exhaust the patience of a too academic-minded teacher. But further questions invariably follow, although it may be days later. These, for instance, were asked:

"Who did paint those pictures?"

"Did they know each other?"

"Did they see each other's pictures?"

"Maybe George Inness imitated Corot on purpose."

At this point of observation the pupil has become his own critic, and actively appreciative.

Not only do esthetically valuable materials, informally experienced, lead to curiosity about their production, but also to articulate recognition of their individual charm and characterization. It is not uncommon for children to make such comments as,

"Vachel Lindsay must have written that. A lot of his poems are funny and about such everyday things like potatoes or cats."

"I guess he did write it. He often has the same line in bunches of three. I'm getting so I can tell ahead of time when they are coming."

In a certain small town with very limited display of decorative advertising a teacher has attempted to show several groups of children loveliness in pieces of colored silk. In each group some child has said in some form or other:

"You know how the electric store has purple velvet in the back of the windows by the refrigerators? Well, it is always draped so that it makes deep shadows. It seems that deep shadows always

make colors look prettier. I look in the electric store every Saturday."

"I look there too. The purple shines on the enamel and makes a soft light."

One class had been experimenting for some days with combinations of colors, looking at sheets of paper against a screen. The teacher with difficulty refrained from quoting rules about color relationship. At last the children found a generalization:

"I'm going to look at a lot of ads in the Saturday Evening Post and see whether big patches of light color and little patches of bright color always make the prettiest pages. Let's try it again with those two blues."

"Maybe that is the reason I like Miss Baker's dress. It has a big space of brown and two little spaces of orange."

Following frequent reading of excerpts from *North America* by Lucy Sprague Mitchell a conversation went as follows:

"Just putting in little things is what makes that story so real. We would say, 'She washed the dishes.' But Mrs. Mitchell says, 'She washed the supper dishes and cleaned the sink.' You can just see the mother doing it. There are places like that in all her stories."

"What I wait for in that book is the little sentences like, 'But he couldn't.' or 'She liked it.' You know, they're sorta cute."

Apparently observation creates feeling, feeling stimulates analysis, and analysis clarifies observation in an ever widening circle of subjective experience.

Delayed crystallization of analytical generalizations like the examples quoted does not justify a genetics of appreciation that is commonly taken for granted. Teachers sometimes industriously exploit supposedly elementary attention to narrative in poetry in order to teach significance of rhythm, alliteration, or figure of speech. However, very young children give intense attention to poetry in an unfamiliar vocabulary or even in a strange language. Prose narrative too involved or too foreign in content to hold attention stimulates response to its rhythm, or balance, or euphony. Varying degrees of ex-

citement and repose in response to colors may precede interest in naming them, if instruction has not placed a premium on the academic activity. The very interests that are considered most elementary may be largely reflections of adult readiness to observe them, while aesthetic factors that seem most abstract and difficult to teach may be intrusted to the inherent appeal of the subject matter. It is an objective of education continuously to reveal new meanings in aesthetics, but the order of growth need not be logical nor consistent. Constant observation of pupils should be the basis for modifying procedure so that repetition of sensory experience does not drift into idle repetition of reaction.

A superficially accepted genetics of interest that grades materials without observation of children's actual interests is equally unjustified. Some years ago *Little Boy Blue* by Eugene Field was used extensively for memorization in first grades, its theme of parental grief being ignored because it was about a child. *The Boy Jesus* by Hoffman, depicting adolescent consecration, was used for picture study in early elementary grades. Hans Christian Anderson has written some splendid satire of adult institutions. The humor of Lewis Carroll bores some children, but amuses many adults. On the other hand, very little children appreciate the descriptive rhythm of *Young Lochinvar* and the homely affection of Joyce Kilmer's *House With Nobody In It*. There is some reason to feel that fairies, as conceived by un-superstitious peoples, are an abstraction of the adult mind. Many children are entirely unresponsive to their appeal in art and literature. Others struggle to grasp their significance and are disturbed by inability to "believe in" them. However that may be, observation of children's appreciations should be the only criterion for selecting materials that lead into increasingly meaningful experience.

There is evidence of a relationship between appreciation for beauty in any form and impulse for creative self-expression. Sometimes, at least, the relationship must be causal, although expression need not necessarily find the same medium as impression. Certainly the two activities at their best in sincerity and spontaneity have a common background of subjective feeling. Lessons in appreciation of the aesthetic may be expected to supply for some responsive children the primary requisite for creative expression. A conspicuously self-sufficient little girl, after memorizing *Tartary* by Walter de la Mare, wondered:

"Could the Lord of Tartary be a lady? I'll draw a picture of how she would walk."

Experimentation with providing extensive sensory experience shows that practice in seeing something to the art of others also gives children keener appreciation and criticism of their own efforts. As Fenton said, upon rereading his own stories:

"This paragraph about the school bus is the best one I ever wrote. The words kinda go along smooth as if they belong together. I guess I'll rewrite the paragraph about the railroad crossing."

In time increased sensitivity to the beautiful influences drawing, modeling, dramatization, and music toward simpler sincerity and nicer articulation. Other by-products in personality development arising from lessons in appreciation have been implied. They result largely from informality and flexibility of method.

Because the medium of educational activity, human personality, is infinitely complex, any worthy educational activity has immeasurably far-reaching, unpredictable results. Efforts to secure the by-products of any particular kind of exercise, valuable as they may be, distract from the primary purpose and dissipate energy from its accomplishment. To teach ap-

Straws in the Wind

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THE FIRST day of school the kindergarten teacher tells a story to "little pitchers with big ears," and she continues to tell stories all the year, delightful stories. She reads stories, also, from lovely books, showing the pictures as she reads.

Every teacher all along the way tells stories and reads stories. As soon as a child begins to read, he begins to make acquaintances for himself in the world of books. The books are most attractive, the bindings brightly colored, the pictures charming. The children illustrate scenes from the stories. The teacher travels down to the library, returns to school laden with slides to entertain the pupils and make characters and scenes more real to the children. We know we are teaching our pupils the best of literature.

But what do our pupils talk about in their "free" time, and what do they love to dwell upon? One observer decided to make a little test. She was suspicious.

She went into two sixth grade rooms on Wednesday morning, November 7, and asked seventy-eight boys and girls to head their papers as usual, then crease them from top to bottom so as to make two parts. At the top of one part she directed the children to write "From the Funnies"; at the top of the other, "From Books." Then she gave them ten minutes to write the names of as many characters (explained to mean people, boys and girls, or animals) as they could remember, putting those from funnies in the place headed "Funnies" and those from books in the place headed "Books." The children

were told they could write names from any book or story they had ever read or heard, in school or out. The ten minutes proved ample time. After it was finished, the children were asked to turn the paper over and write a paragraph of three or four sentences telling why they liked a character either from books or from funnies. Here are the results:

CHARACTERS RECALLED BY SIXTH GRADE PUPILS

FROM THE FUNNIES

No. of Char.	6-A		6-B		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
40-44	0	0	1	0	1
35-39	0	0	0	0	0
30-34	3	0	0	0	3
25-29	1	0	0	0	1
20-24	2	3	2	2	9
15-19	5	9	6	5	25
10-14	3	8	6	5	22
5- 9	4	2	7	4	17
0- 4	0	0	0	0	0
Medians	17	15.5	13.3	14	14

FROM BOOKS

No. of Char.	6-A		6-B		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
40-44					
35-39					
30-34					
25-29	0	0	0	1	1
20-24	0	0	0	0	0
15-19	1	0	0	1	2
10-14	1	4	3	3	11
5- 9	3	9	7	8	27
0- 4	13	9	12	3	37
Medians	3.5	6.1	4.5	8.1	5.3

It is interesting that in the 6-A group (the more advanced group) two boys and three girls could not recall one character in any book read in school or out, at any

time. The three boys who ranked highest in the recall of characters from the funnies (scores 32, 31, 31) could recall only 5, 3, and 1 character from books, respectively. In the 6-B group one boy could not recall one character from books. Three other boys could recall only one, each. One of these last mentioned boys could recall forty-one characters from the funnies. The girl who recalled twenty-five characters from books recalled twenty-four from the funnies. Her mother was a teacher, her father is a lawyer.

PARAGRAPH WRITING
BY SIXTH GRADE PUPILS

ABOUT CHARACTERS FROM FUNNIES

	Boys	Girls	Total
6-A	16	17	33
6-B	14	9	23

ABOUT CHARACTERS FROM BOOKS

	Boys	Girls	Total
6-A	2	5	7
6-B	8	7	15

The wind seems to be blowing away from "good" literature. The funnies have us beaten. What shall we do?

Book Week meant more to us at Cleveland School this year than ever before, for from this little experiment we realize that our teaching has lacked the fire that kindles enthusiasm for lovable characters in books. We must do something. We plan to set the children making tests, not only of names recalled, but of scenes and sayings. We hope to stir up pride in enlarging the circle of acquaintanceship with famous characters. We shall have some "spell-downs" adapted to book lore.

We will build a wind break.

SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE IN APPRECIATION

(Continued from page 44)

preciation for the sake of appreciation only, to enrich children's lives with an absorbing, meaningful leisure commands the best efforts of creative teaching. "This one thing I do" as a watchword of teaching need not rob appreciations of their incidental value; it can protect them from deteriorating into artificial motivation. So the teacher takes notice of the effect of enhanced appreciation upon expression and capitalizes it in individual instruction; but she keeps the two class activities entirely separate. She refuses to use art and literature to entice children into interest in social studies. She does not divert enjoyment of natural beauty to attention to mere content in music or poetry, nor conversely does she utilize aesthetics to sugar-coat nature study. She intrusts to the inherent values of aesthetic materials, sub-

jectively experienced, attainment of their educative by-products.

Teaching is largely a matter of arranging settings in which children may find experience. There is no final answer as to just how it is to be done. Conditions that contribute to subjectivity in appreciation may be discovered by studying the essential characteristics of appreciation itself. Growing insight into its essence leads to *unending experimentation* in teaching procedure and choice of subject matter. Scholarly and sympathetic understanding of children's responses is the foundation for persistent effort in encouraging spontaneity. Music, art, literature, and nature study can be infinitely more than new fields of knowledge. Aesthetics can transform the new leisure into opportunity for more abundant living.

Editorial

Against Great Odds

AT THE conclusion of her spirited and sensible account of the test conducted to determine the number of characters children could recall from books and from the "funnies," Miss Drohan says (page 46): "We realize that our teaching has lacked the fire that kindles enthusiasm for lovable characters in books." She may be right, but teachers, however ardent in their presentation of good books, would have difficulty in overcoming a situation existing in many, many American homes.

For in the majority of American families, the daily and Sunday papers furnish the bulk, and often even the sum total of the reading of adults, while the "funnies" supply the children's reading. Many of the larger city dailies publish from two to six pages of comics every day, and as many as twenty-four pages on Sunday. This is no accident. Newspapers are commercial undertakings, and if a paper publishes twenty-four pages of "funnies," it is because its sales are materially increased thereby.

Now there is little that is vicious or unethical in the comics themselves. The objections to them are that they are sensational, often wildly fantastic, crudely drawn, and, like cheap literature, corrupt the desire for better reading and weaken the power of discernment. Their ubiquitousness sets up a negative situation which the teacher has difficulty in overcoming, however vivid her enthusiasm.

Consider the typical home on a Sunday. The comic supplement, with its tabloid additions, is scattered over chairs, settees, rugs. The children, with avid and

insatiable interest, are pulling the sheets about, exclaiming, disputing, laughing, and occasionally quarreling. The radio, which was switched on before church services, is going at full blast, for as the hours have passed, nervous excitement has risen, and the controls have been opened to give the program full ascendancy over the din of talk and play. To the children, what does this mean? Church has entered into the scene only briefly. The motif of the day is developed from the most lurid and inartistic aspect of journalism—the comic supplement. Sunday is one day in seven in the home; to the school teacher the ratio is one day to five. One cannot but wonder if it will be sufficient for Miss Drohan and her colleagues to intensify their efforts unless something is done within the homes to lessen the hold that the comics have on the emotional and imaginative lives of the children.

Apparently this problem is not solely American. In her article on "The Art of the Modern Children's Book in Europe" (page 36), Miss Martin speaks of the efforts of Dr. Hendrik van Tichelen, director of the school museum of Antwerp, and the artist, Felix Timmermans, to produce books which will replace the "funnies" with material of higher artistic quality. There are already on the American market excellent picture books which may be made to serve a similar purpose. Miss Drohan, and the teachers who share her undertaking, may find them of service in building their "windbreak." All honor to them if they can erect it against such odds as are set up by the supremacy of the comics in the home.

Reviews and Abstracts

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Roland the Warrior. By Virginia Collier and Jeanette Eaton. Illustrated by Frank Schonover. Harcourt, Brace, 1934.

Jeanette Eaton and Virginia Collier, in collaboration, have made the romance of the Middle Ages into a living testimony to youth, to bravery, and to action. Although the authors make much less of the famous battle at Rousevaux than others who have recorded the *Chanson de Roland* for English readers, they make much more of many other events in Roland's youthful life—his training at Charlemagne's court, his battle with Oliver and the sworn fealty of friendship between the youths, his love for Aude and the lady's death with grief over him.

In this rendering of the *Chanson*, the Gavelon motif takes a different turn from the usual. Is Ganthon anywhere else shown as the stepfather of the hero? And does his teasing by the kitchen-boys, who pulled out his whiskers hair by hair, satisfy even a boyish sense of poetic justice?

The technique of these authors is excellent for boy readers. The short paragraphs move forward rapidly and without a heavy load of diction. The

book is not only likeable but extremely readable, a combination not often found in boys' books which unite scholarship with action. I compliment the authors on a rare accomplishment.

The Lapp Mystery. A Boy's Story of Finnish Lapland. By S. S. Smith. Illustrated by James Read. Harcourt Brace, 1934.

When one surveys the personnel of this mystery he is thoroughly convinced that Erkki, Jona, and the Wesamaa family are indeed true Finns. However, racial qualities which are evident to an adult reader fade into insignificance when the adolescent boy reads of other boys having real adventures in the far north. Vesilov and the O.G.P.U. complicate the tale with a flavor very Russian indeed. That's a new angle to a mystery tale, but the map found in the cave and the money in the bag are old properties. The "rustling" of reindeer in lieu of cows smacks of the American "Western." I doubt very much if this tale of primitive folk in a pioneer country can be called great, but it reads swiftly, interestingly and possesses the virtue of making two boys the heroes.

PREVENTION AND CORRECTION OF READING DISABILITIES

(Continued from page 32)

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